

BOOK REVIEWS

THE MERCK MANUAL OF DIAGNOSIS AND THERAPY. Eighth Edition, Merck and Co., Rahway, N. J., 1950. \$4.50 Regular Edition and \$5.00 Thumb-Index Edition.

According to the foreword, "this is a completely new handbook, not a revision of previous editions. More than 100 outstanding clinicians throughout the United States have served as authors or consultants and assisted the Editorial Board of 12 physicians." The book consists of two parts, the first of 1,460 pages being an expansion of the material in the previous edition and the addition of new material on diseases, major symptoms, and treatment, and part two, of 110 pages, presenting new chapters on routine immunization measures, clinical and bedside procedures, office laboratory tests, items for the doctor's bag, pre- and postoperative care, etc. Of special interest are chapters on medical emergencies, such as drowning, burns, poisoning, venomous bites, electric shock and infusion reactions.

Each of the 20 sections of Part I is ended with a comprehensive list of classified prescriptions for the treatment of symptoms and pathological physiology of the diseases discussed in the section. Each section is divided into chapters. Each chapter, in general, contains a general introductory statement about the nature of the disease; this is followed by discussions of symptoms and signs, pathology, diagnosis and treatment. There is much new material on allergies, blood cell dyscrasias, uterine bleeding, therapy of thyrotoxicosis, tetanus and malaria, indications for cortisone and ACTH, BAL, mustard gas and newer antibiotics. Surgical as well as medical diseases are discussed. The section on poisoning consists of 45 pages of briefly presented but very helpful information.

There is an up-to-date table of recommended chemotherapy in the more common infections and a table on differential diagnosis of headache.

In view of the scope of the book, with discussions of most of the medical and surgical diseases compressed to 1,570 pages, it is to be expected that many subjects are treated in a far too sketchy and unsatisfactory manner. Especially disappointing to the reviewer were sections on ulcerative colitis, pruritus ani, renal function, alcoholism and herpes, which lacked much of the newer developments.

Merck's Manual is a handy, quick reference book, useful for orientation but not for a complete discussion of any subject.

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INFANT NUTRITION—ITS PHYSIOLOGICAL BASIS. By F. W. Clements, M.D., D.P.H., D.T.M., Senior Medical Officer, Commonwealth Department of Health, Australia. The Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1949. \$4.50.

This is an excellent reference book for the obstetrician, pediatrician, and general practitioner. The subject of fetal nutrition is reviewed comprehensively. Recent studies in the field of biochemistry and physiology are summarized and applied to the clinical management of pregnancy. As might be expected in a book by an Australian, breast feeding and breast milk are discussed at great length. In that country the common lack of home refrigeration, the infrequency of pasteurization and of tuberculin testing of dairy herds, and finally the limited availability of evaporated milk all contributed to the advocacy of breast feeding during the last decade. As a result the study of the biochemistry of breast milk has been pursued more intensively in Australia than in this country. A detailed and well documented comparison of cow's milk and breast milk is made.

There follows a section on caloric and nutrient requirements of infants and children including metabolic disturbances of dietetic origin.

The contents of this book are not quite duplicated by any one American text. Perhaps a more descriptive title for it would be, "Recent advances in the study of fetal and infant nutrition with the clinical application thereof."

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MEDICINE FOR NURSES. By W. Gordon Sears, M.D. (Lond.), Senior Physician and Superintendent Mile End Hospital, London. The Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1949. \$3.00.

Since World War II most nursing schools have put greater emphasis on academic instruction than they did during the war years. Consequently textbooks are being selected not for brevity or with an eye to fulfilling minimum requirements, but for an increasingly comprehensive knowledge of basic nursing courses. Recent textbooks in medicine for nurses are larger than before, include more information about diseases, emphasize in detail the nursing aspects of diseases, and are well illustrated, some with color plates. In comparison with these newer textbooks the present volume, published in England, is inadequate. The field of medicine is too briefly covered, and many of the details of diseases with which the present graduate nurse is expected to be familiar are omitted. The medical aspects of coronary thrombosis, for example, are covered in less than one page. The term *myocardial infarction* is not mentioned and no reference is made to shock or changes of blood pressure which may occur. The pathogenesis and pathology of the condition are summed up in four sentences. Under treatment, the student nurse is told that the patient should remain in bed at least eight weeks. The use of anticoagulants is dealt with in one sentence: "Dicoumarol may be used to prevent extension of the clotting."

In most of the sections the details of nursing care are not demarcated clearly from the over-all medical treatment. This has advantages in some respects since the student is made aware of the whole therapy in a given problem—nursing as well as medical. On the other hand, a careful distinction between the duties and responsibilities of nurse and physician is not emphasized in many cases. The student might justifiably be confused as to what she is expected to do and what is the doctor's responsibility.

Terms used throughout the book are British and in some cases might cause confusion. A rubber sheet, for example, is referred to as a macintosh; phenobarbital is called phenobarbitone; chills are rigors, etc. The double-joined vowel is used throughout the text: oedema, aenemia, haemorrhage, aetiology.

There are 67 illustrations. The photographs for the most part are clear and typical of certain medical conditions. Diagrams are used to explain some of the fundamental physiologic factors involved in diseases. Although very simple, these diagrams are pertinent and basically correct in terms of classical principles. There are no colored illustrations.

This book cannot be recommended as a standard textbook in medicine for the majority of nursing schools. As a supplementary volume to be used primarily for review, or as a reference for abbreviated courses in nursing, such as those given to nurses' aides or military corpsmen, it might prove useful.